

居心叵测的日本防卫白皮书

Japan Defence White Paper has Hidden Agenda

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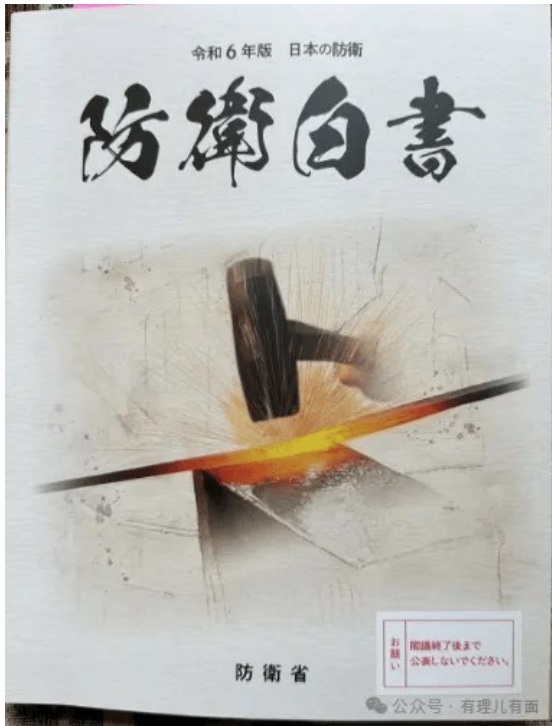
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Article Title in Chinese: 居心叵测的日本防卫白皮书
(Jūxīnpōcè de rìběn fāngwèi báipíshū)

Source: 有理儿有面
Special Column – “Yǒulǐ er yǒu miàn” (Reason & Sense)

Article Source: <https://user.guancha.cn/main/content?id=1267180>

Date of Publication: 14 July 2024



Source: user.guancha.cn

The 2024 edition of Japan's Defence White Paper bearing the image of a “hammer forging iron” on the cover was published yesterday.

According to the Japanese media, the meaning the front cover image “forging a sword” conveys is to express Japan’s current determination to enhance its military strength.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan’s Self Defence Forces (SDF), this White Paper is the 50th Defence White Paper published so far.

In a nutshell, a glimpse at the content of the White Paper reveals its ulterior motives and malicious nature.

On July 12, Japan’s Defence Minister, Minoru Kihara, stated that currently Japan “is situated in the most serious and complex security environment since the end of the Second World War,” and therefore it needs to bring in a series of defence policies.”

However, the core of the White Paper lies not in the defence policy of the SDF but in Japan’s hidden agenda and malicious intentions towards its neighbouring countries. Japan’s hard to hide hostility towards its neighbouring countries is exposed by the large number of offensive expressions that have appeared for the first time in a Japanese Defence White Paper.

The first to bear the brunt of this hostility is Japan’s old neighbour: China. In Japan’s eyes, China continues to be its “biggest imaginary enemy”.

Having abandoned the previously used term “security concern”, Japan targeted China as the “biggest strategic challenge” in last year’s White Paper.

But in this year's Defence White Paper, instead of mending its ways, Japan has further intensified its stance and more forcefully depicted the "China Threat Theory", placing China as directly confronting Japan.

This year's Defence White Paper spent 30 pages in all to analyse China's military trends, upholding that "China's military strength is rapidly increasing" and that "its military activities are increasing day by day in Japan's vicinity". Besides, the White Paper also professes that China's military activities in Taiwan's vicinity are "increasing day by day", believing that China is "attempting to elevate its actual combat capabilities", and hence seizing the opportunity to sensationalise the Taiwan Strait crisis.

Japan is fuming with rage over China conducting routine patrolling in the Diaoyu Island maritime region, calling for an "immediate halt".

This is the first White Paper in Japan to point out the wide range and scope of China's military activities, claiming that the ambit of China's military activities has expanded from what is called the "First Island Chain" of the Japanese archipelago, Okinawa, and the Philippines to the

"Second Island Chain" of Izu Island, Ogasawara Island, Guam and other Islands. Five of the eight peripheral active military zones, which Japan enumerates as demanding vigilance, are actually related to China.

It is most ridiculous that Japan is not even ashamed of piling up a hoard of "China Threat Theories" against China – a country which pursues an independent and peaceful foreign policy, a country that is the builder of world peace, a country which is the contributor to global development and is the upholder of international order.

Apart from China, Japan has also "attacked" Russia and North Korea. Not just this, the White Paper even carries a photograph of Putin.

The White Paper views Russia as a major concern, the reason being that Russia, China and North Korea have developed military relations. Japan is worried that Chinese and Russian naval vessels will repeatedly patrol in its vicinity and that the strategic partnership between Russia and North Korea will impact its security.



Japan affirms plans for deeper regional ties to counter China

Source: *nytimes.com*

The White Paper also points out that North Korea's missile range can already cover American territory. Let alone little Japan, even Big Brother's house is not safe.

As is customary, Japan again added the sentence "Dokdo Island is Japan's". As soon as the White Paper was published, it generated stern protest from South Korea.

What is surprising is the fact that this White Paper also has a children's version. Since the year 2021, Japan's Defence Ministry has been publishing a children's version of Defence White Papers for Japan's primary and middle school students.

The children's version is not very bulky. Its objective is to make the "bearers of the

nation's future" i.e., the children, understand and support Japan's national defence.

The children's version utilised animation that the Japanese excel at in order to advocate the virtues of patriotism and loyalty towards the Emperor as well as to make children firmly remember that the United States is Japan's protective umbrella, the USA is Japan's father, and the "US-Japan alliance" will last forever while it simultaneously propagates "China Threat Theories" without sparing any effort in maligning China.

This made many people in Japan shudder with fear as they cannot help but think of the Japanese "Kamikaze" during the Second World War.

By this stage, the White Paper has revealed its real objective that Japan must strengthen its "defence capabilities" since it is faced with so many "external threats". In this regard, the White Paper put forth seven major capabilities that include: stand-off strike capabilities, joint air and anti-missile defence capabilities, unmanned equipment defence capabilities, cross-domain combat capabilities, Command, Control and Intelligence (C2I) capabilities, mobile deployment

capabilities, and “sustainability and resilience” capabilities.

It is very evident that among these seven major capabilities, both the stand-off strike capabilities and the cross-domain combat capabilities have nothing to do with the national defence of Japan; these are clearly associated with measures to lead an offensive. Japan’s evil ambitions and its efforts of turning into a nation with an offensive military have again been thoroughly exposed.

The “Peace Constitution” was promulgated on May 3, 1947, under the supervision of the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces General Douglas MacArthur to prevent Japan’s relapse into militarism after the United States single-handedly occupied Japan post the Second World War. Article IX of the “Peace Constitution” stipulates: “Japan is indefinitely giving up launching a war as a sovereign nation and neither will it maintain a ground force, navy, air force or any other military forces nor recognise the right to fight a war with another nation.”

Bound by the “Peace Constitution”, Japan has for long executed the “Exclusive Defence” Policy. Japan’s 1970 Defence White Paper described “Exclusive

Defence” as “only the bare minimum amounts of military forces can be used within Japanese territory to defend Japan in a defensive war. Japan cannot possess offensive weaponry and cannot strike another nation first.”



Japan defence white paper says China’s military ambitions ‘greatest strategic challenge’

Source: *scmp.com*

According to this stipulation, Japan is not permitted to use weapons such as long-range bombers, attack aircraft carriers, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), etc. that threaten other nations. Concurrently, Japan cannot exceed the scope of self-defence. Japan can only employ Self Defence Forces when faced with a direct or indirect invasion and cannot implement the so-called “overseas troops deployment”.

Japan, however, refuses to comply! How can Japan, with such “aspirations”, remain tied to the “Peace Constitution” for long?

Therefore, the aggressive calls for breaking the restrictions of the “Peace Constitution” have been constantly growing in Japan.

With China’s peaceful rise in recent years, the United States has been increasingly relaxing restrictions on Japan in order to encircle China. Therefore, taking advantage of this opportunity, Japan has secretly unfettered all legislative, armament and troop restrictions on itself.

First, Japan has built a reasonable ground for itself at the legislative level.

Manipulations seeking military expansion have existed for long. As early as in 1956, it was put forth that “under conditions of an invasion such as a missile attack etc., using missiles to attack the enemy’s base will fall under self-defence”.

During his Prime Ministerial term in 2015, Shinzo Abe completed a security system that enabled Japan to exercise “the right of collective self-defence”.

On December 16, 2022, the Kishida government promulgated “Three Documents on Security” including the “National Security Strategy” which officially described “offensive capabilities

against the enemy bases” as “counter-attack capabilities.”

The 2023 edition of the Defence White Paper further described “counter-attack capabilities” as “utilising missile defence networks to not only prevent invading missiles but to also prevent further armed attack from the enemy, thus granting the ability to effectively carry out the counter-attack. This compels the enemy to give up the idea of attacking thereby preventing the armed attack itself”; meaning that Japan can also use missiles.

Second, Japan is looking for international allies who will stick through thick and thin.

Apart from strengthening the US-Japan alliance and time and again currying favour with the US, Japan is also actively expanding its “friend circle” by actively uniting with nations sharing similar ideals and goals.

Japan has signed a “Reciprocal Access Agreement” (RAA) with Australia and the United Kingdom; the “Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement” (ACSA) with Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, India and others; the “Defence Equipment and Technology Transfer Agreement” with Germany, Italy,

France, Indonesia, Malaysia and others. Besides, Japan has also expanded military exercises and military cooperation with the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia, among other nations. On July 8, Japan also signed an agreement with the Philippines which allows the two nations to deploy military forces on each other's territory with the intention of meddling in the South China Sea affairs.

The White Paper notes that Japan has deepened cooperation with nations other than its friend and ally the United States and that the number of "Cooperative nations and institutions" has increased from 47 last year to 51 this year.

Third, Japan has massively increased the expenditure in stepping up armaments production.



A security guard at the Ministry of Defence in Tokyo on July 12, 2024
Source: *philstar.com*

This year, for the first time, Japan dedicated an entire column in the White Paper to discuss national defence capabilities and expenditure. By 2027, Japan's military expenditure will constitute 2% of the GDP, equal to the standards set by NATO. This will make Japan the nation with the third largest military expenditure, next only to the United States and China.

With regard to armaments and equipment, Japan will produce Type-12 domestically produced anti-ship extended-range guided missiles within five years. It will also buy US-made "Tomahawk" cruise missiles with a range of nearly 1600 km. These offensive armaments possessing combat capabilities have exceeded Japan's own defence zones and possess offensive capabilities such as destroying missile bases in other nations' territories. In reality, the provisions of Japan's "Peace Constitution" have for long been violated.

Besides, Japan has also upgraded the frigate, *Izumo*, into an offensive aircraft carrier and is jointly producing next-gen fighter jets with the United States. Japan's SDF will establish an "integrated operations command" with the United States military.

Fourth, Japan is firmly grasping the deployment of military bases.

With over a decade of planning, Japan has successively deployed Type-12 shore-to-ship and surface-to-air missile systems on Ishigaki Island, Amami Oshima Island, Okinawa Island and Miyako Island. Apart from the US military base and the Japanese Air Self Defence Force, Okinawa also stations the 15th Brigade of the Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force.

Among them, Ishigaki Island is hardly more than 200 km away from Taiwan and 170 km away from Diaoyu Island while Miyako Island is 200 km away from Diaoyu Island. As can be seen, Japan is engaged in a futile attempt to deploy offensive armaments in the islands lying in the vicinity of Diaoyu Island. Strategically, it is militarily encircling Diaoyu Island and preparing for forcefully seizing it or preparing to respond militarily in case of a possible armed conflict.

However, aspirations are fleshed out but the reality is bare-boned. This statement is perfect for Japan. While the aggressive “Defence White Paper” was being released, the latest opinion poll released by *Jiji News* showed that the support rate of the Kishida cabinet fell to 15.5%, hitting a

new low since the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) returned to power in 2012.

This came as a heavy blow to Kishida who just returned from the NATO Summit.

Despite the White Paper viewing China as an “imaginary enemy” and shouting the “wolf is coming”, how many Japanese people will overlook their security and stability to support the Kishida government’s “counter-attack plans” as Japan’s internal challenges mount? Moreover, given that the memories of the Second World War have not yet faded among the Asian people, is there anyone who will find it difficult to see through Japan’s ulterior motives?

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The views expressed here are those of the original author and not necessarily of the translator or of the Institute of Chinese Studies.

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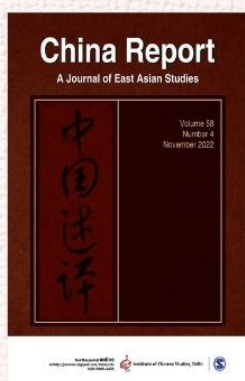


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China Report is brought out by Sage Publications Ltd, New Delhi.

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